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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [FR](#) [KPAL](#)

SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS: FRANCE CONCERNED, WILL SEEK
EU COMMON POSITION ON HAMAS

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JOSIAH ROSENBLATT, FOR REAS
ONS 1.4 B/D

[11.](#) (U) In a first official GOF reaction to Palestinian elections, Prime Minister Villepin said on January 26 that "we are in a situation that leads me to express my concern." He added that in order to work with the Palestinian government, certain conditions had to be met, including renunciation of violence, recognizing the state of Israel and recognizing international accords, including the Oslo accords. These were the basic conditions, said Villepin, for France and its European partners to help advance the peace process.

[12.](#) (U) The same day, MFA spokesman Jean-Baptiste Mattei reminded reporters that Hamas remains a designated terrorist organization as listed by the European Union. Still, he applauded the conditions in which the elections took place, saying that the calm on the streets and the high rate of participation were proof of the democratic maturity of the Palestinian people. The elections represent a "consolidation of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority," said Mattei.

[13.](#) (C) Etienne Chapon, the MFA's desk officer for Israel and the Palestinian territories, told Poloff on January 26 that the statements by PM Villepin and MFA spokesman Mattei would likely be the only initial GOF reactions. France was pushing strongly for a common EU position regarding the elections, said Chapon. He said that the UK agreed on the need for a common EU position. Chapon added that France would push for an EU statement before the Monday Quartet talks in London. One key issue in the statement would be answering how the EU planned to deal with a possible Hamas-led government given that the EU has designated Hamas as a terrorist organization. Chapon said the MFA was in internal consultations on this point.

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Stapleton